

Message Text

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ACTION SY-04

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 SSO-00 SCCT-01 /012 W

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O R 310920Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6902

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TANANARIVE 0200

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEC MA

SUBJECT: SPECIAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT - TANANARIVE

REF: STATE 21692; PRETORIA 0363

1. APPRECIATE SPECIAL EFFORTS AND ATTENTION GIVEN BY DEPT AND DIA TO OUR REQUEST FOR SPECIAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT, BUT I DO NOT CONSIDER IT WISE TO USE DAO PRETORIA AIRCRAFT FOR TRANSPORTING SUCH EQUIPMENT.

2. REQUEST FOR PERMISSION FROM GOMR FOR UNUSUAL STEP OF VISIT BY THIS AIRCRAFT WOULD RUN HIGH RISK OF SERIOUS POLITICAL MISINTERPRETATION AT THIS JUNCTURE WHEN GENERAL RAMANANTSOA GOING THROUGH DELICATE PROCESS OF FORMING NEW GOVERNMENT. MERE REQUEST FOR VISIT OF DAO AIRCRAFT AT THIS TIME COULD BE INTERPRETED AS INTRUSION IN MALAGASY POLITICAL AFFAIRS, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW FACT OUR OWN DAO AIRCRAFT HAD TO BE WITHDRAWN IN 1973 AT REQUEST OF OUTGOING GOVERNMENT. MOREOVER, FACT THAT DAO AIRCRAFT IN QUESTION IS STATIONED IN SOUTH AFRICA COULD FURTHER RAISE SUSPICIONS THAT WE ATTEMPTING INFLUENCE MALAGASY POLICY IN FORMATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT. IN ADDITION, IF WORD OF VISIT BY AIRCRAFT SHOULD LEAK OUT PUBLICLY, HOSTILE PRESS WOULD PLAY IT IN MANNER LIKELY
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SERIOUSLY EMBARRASS BOTH RAMANANTSOA AND U.S. FACT THAT

AIRCRAFT IS CARGO RATHER THAN COMBAT AIRCRAFT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE TO ABOVE ASSESSMENT.

3. GIVEN ABOVE, I DO NOT THINK PERMISSION WOULD BE GRANTED AT THIS TIME FOR DAO PRETORIA AIRCRAFT TO LAND, NOR DO I THINK WE SHOULD EVEN ASK.

4. HOWEVER, I WOULD STILL LIKE HAVE AT LEAST TEAR GAS ON HAND AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE. THOUGH I CONSIDER CHANCES ARE AGAINST POSSIBILITY OF MOB ACTION AGAINST EMBASSY AND THUS OF NEED TO USE THESE INSTRUMENTS, I THINK THAT, IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE SITUATION COULD TURN VOLATILE, IT WOULD BE WISE PRECAUTION TO HAVE THEM ON HAND. WHILE FRENCH ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE TARGET OF MOB VIOLENCE, WE CANNOT EXCLUDE THAT IT MIGHT RUB OFF ON US AS "FELLOW IMPERIALISTS," PARTICULARLY IF RAMANANTSOA SHOULD MOVE TO "CAPITALIST RIGHT" IN FORMATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT.

5. RE PRETORIA'S 331 AND 335, CAN RSO BANNERMAN PROCURE TEAR GAS FROM WITHIN HIS REGION? WE WOULD, IF NECESSARY, BE PREPARED HAVE HIS ARRIVAL DELAYED BRIEFLY IF HE COULD PICK UP TEAR GAS AND BRING IT WITH HIM.
MENDENHALL

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